

# Lumbung, commons and community art



a conversation  
on the  
behind-the-scenes  
of documenta fifteen



HumDrumPress



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originally recorded & broadcast  
on Radio WORM, Rotterdam, Nether-  
lands, 24th March, 2023; 19:00-20:25.

#### Instructions for use

This publication includes sound recordings that were played between conversations. It therefore contains QR codes for downloading and playing from the web server of HumDrumPress, as well as printed waveforms of 15-second low-fidelity (8bit/1500 Hz) snippets of each recording. It is technically possible to reconstruct sound files from these printed waveforms, by scanning them and using software programs like *ImageToSound*. (More information can be found in Patrick Feaster's blog article *New Software for Playing Pictures of Sound Waves*, 2016, <https://griffonagedotcom.wordpress.com/2016/11/20/new-software-for-playing-pictures-of-sound-waves/>)

This conversation originally took place on Radio WORM, a community internet radio station run by, and inside of Rotterdam's alternative cultural venue WORM. Our one and a half hour talk, interrupted only by a few short pieces of music and sound recordings, took place on the evening of Friday, March 24, 2023. We, Simon Kentgens and Florian Cramer, had been witnesses and peripheral participants of documenta fifteen in Kassel in the summer of 2022, and tried to draw our preliminary, personal conclusions after an intense and controversial event.

For us, documenta fifteen was the culmination of a longer debate about radical collectivity and the commons in the arts. The commons is a model of production, and of society, in which

resources are freely shared and collectively owned by a community. Examples include Free/Open Source software, public libraries and other shared resources.

As collaborators at Willem de Kooning Academy, Rotterdam's art school, we had been involved in various projects around collective, self-organized, community- and commons-oriented, and often non-Western arts practices, in order to rethink our school's curriculum, which, like most art schools, focuses on students' individual artistic and work portfolio development. For years we had worked with various local and international multidisciplinary artist collectives in workshops we organized at our school. These included Gudskul, an alternative art school

founded by three Jakarta-based collectives, including ruangrupa; 展銷場 Display Distribute from Hong Kong; Jatiwangi art Factory from Indonesia; Banana School (BananSkolen), an alternative, non-hierarchical school run by the Goodiepal & Pals (GP&PLS) collective in Copenhagen; the Amsterdam-based We Are Here collective of undocumented refugees, and the Rotterdam-based Take-A-Way collective of artists, refugees and addicts.

We reencountered many of these collectives as documenta fifteen participants in the summer of 2022. Our co-worker reinaart vanhoe has also worked closely with ruangrupa for more than twenty years, has published a book on them and other Indonesian artist collectives as part of our school's research

program, and ran a community space at documenta fifteen.

Founded in the 1950s as a five-yearly exhibition, Documenta is widely considered to be the world's most important contemporary art event, and usually features art by big-name artists, or artists who become big-name by exhibiting at Documenta.

Documenta fifteen, however, broke with the conventions of contemporary art by neither being a curated exhibition, nor even an art show in any strict sense, but rather a three-month festival to which collectives invited other collectives. These collectives were physically present for many of the one hundred days of the event, and the emphasis was on activities such as workshops, social gatherings, cooking, and other

communal happenings, in addition to exhibitions.

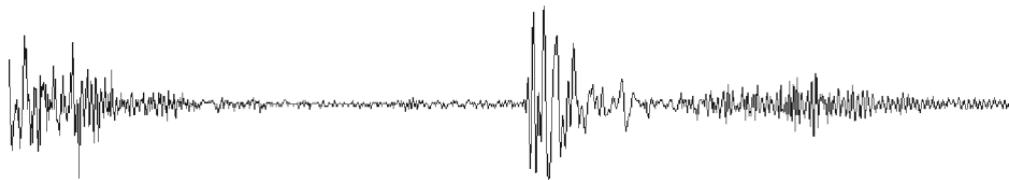
This was part of what ruangrupa, the artistic directors of documenta fifteen, called “lumbung”. In their home country of Indonesia, a lumbung is a rice barn that is collectively used by farmers. In a broader sense, the word corresponds to the English word “commons” which originally stood for collectively owned and used agricultural land. In German and Dutch, the words “Allmende” and “meent” have similar origins and meanings. For ruangrupa, lumbung is also a practice that enables an alternative economy of collectivity, shared resource building, and equitable distribution.

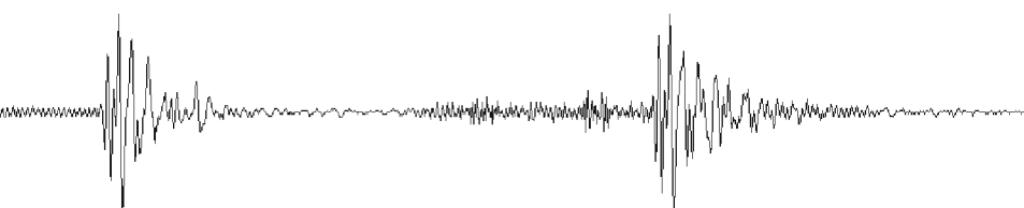
The distribution of curatorial control, its multidisciplinarity, collectivity and shared ownership

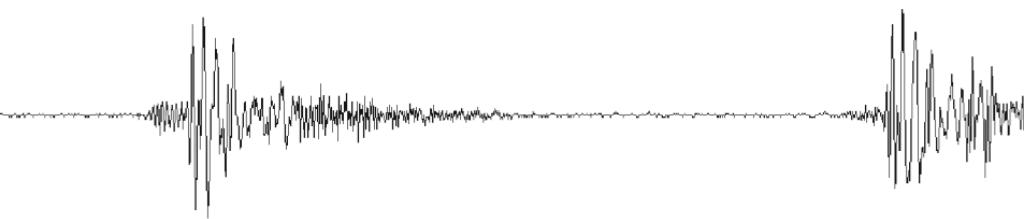
made documenta fifteen a radical, large-scale, real-life commoning experiment: by actually running and living a commons, rather than just imagining it (as art is usually expected to do). It also meant that things went wrong.

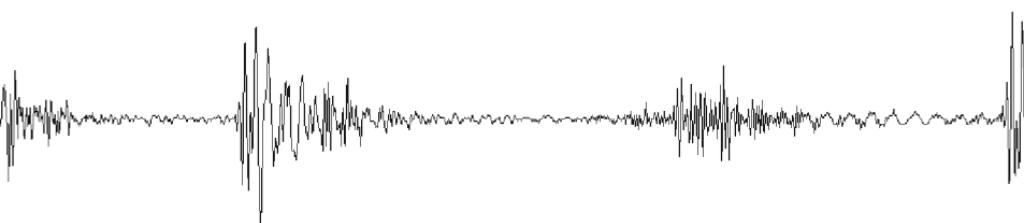
We aren't claiming any critical authority here, or to have the last word on this experiment, but wish to share our experiences and observations to contribute to a larger body of histories of documenta fifteen, written by its community members.

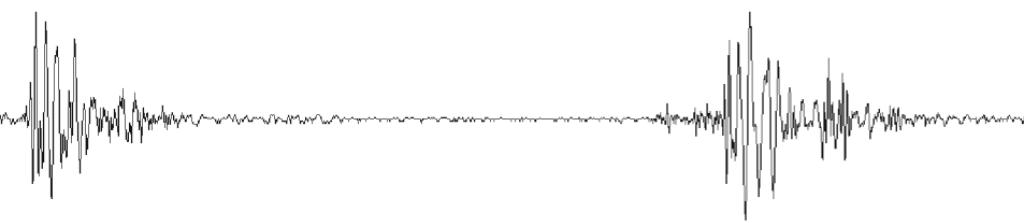
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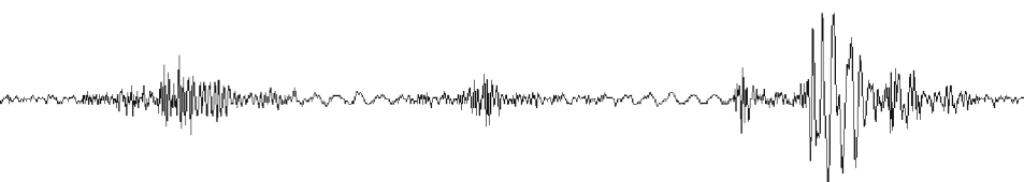


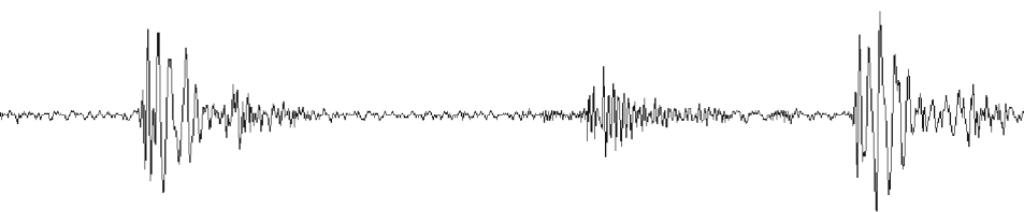


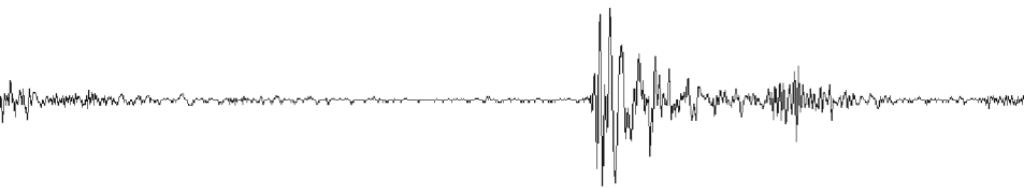


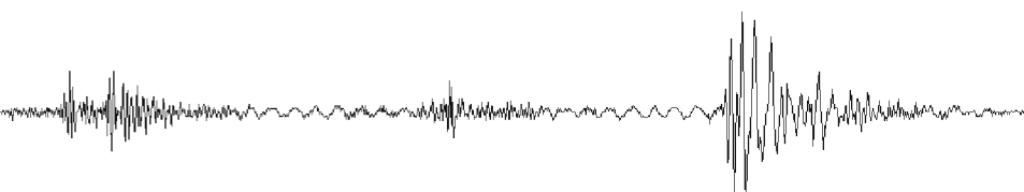


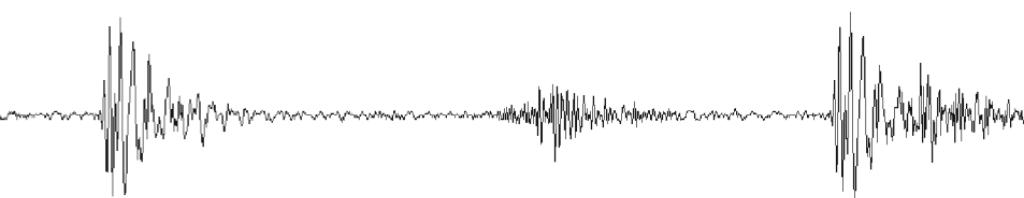


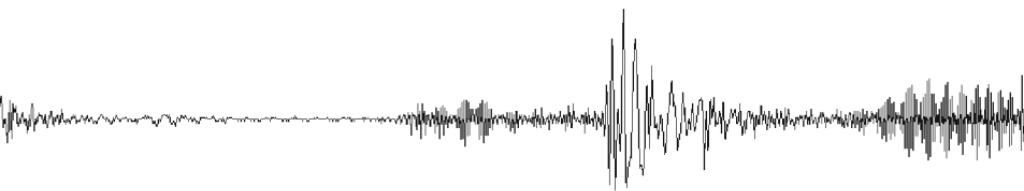


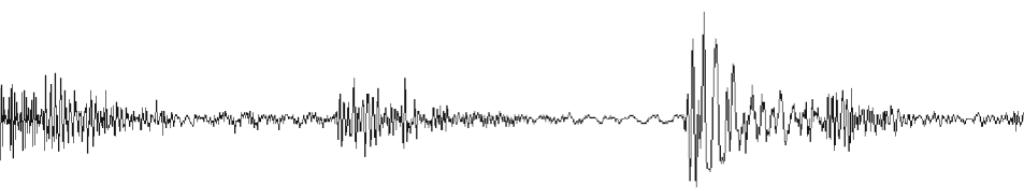


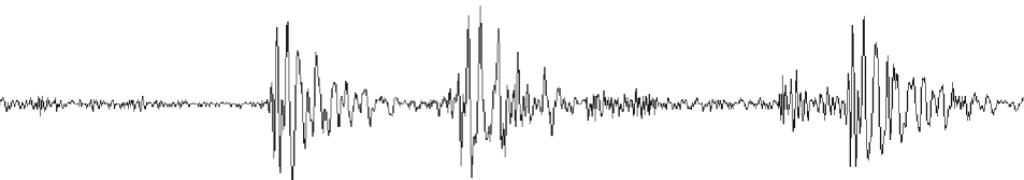


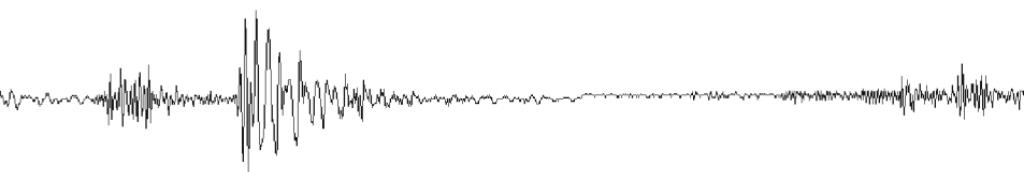


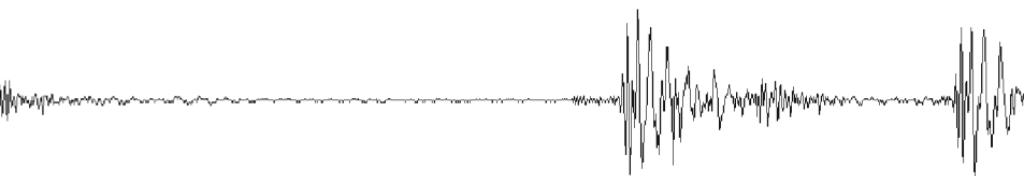


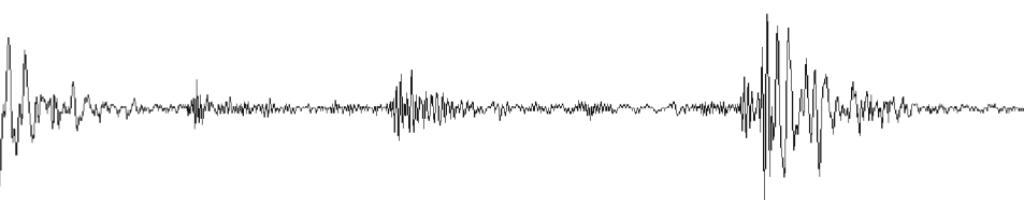


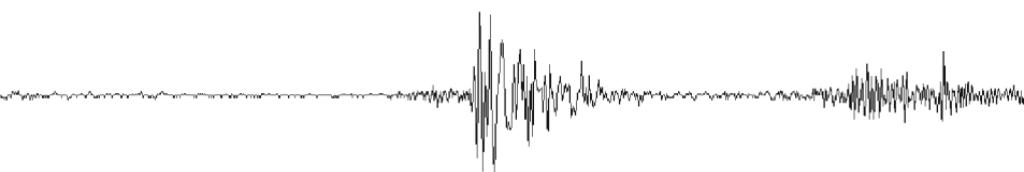












# JINGLE: Roof tile . music

02:47

**My name is Florian Cramer, and I'm here with a guest. Do you want to introduce yourself?**

02:54

**I'm Simon. Thank you for having me, Florian. We've been working together for I think almost ten years... And we've done several research projects, mostly on collective self-organization and autonomy.**

03:15

**Yes, but now we are jumping right into our topic. Maybe we should start with explaining what just heard? It was something that we both participated in: a recording made at documenta fifteen in Kassel, in June 2022, when we were there with a small group of**

**students of Willem de Kooning Academy Rotterdam. Could you maybe explain to the listeners what happened there?**

03:40

**We were listening to a rehearsal of a group of students and ourselves in which we were playing roof tiles, ceramic roof tiles. This was part of a project initiated by Jatiwangi art Factory (JaF), an Indonesian collective from a small town called Jatiwangi, in West Java, Indonesia. JaF was invited to participate in documenta fifteen. In Indonesia, all of their projects revolve around roof tiles, ceramics, etc. For documenta fifteen, they arranged a mass performance with many people playing these roof tiles during the opening week. Several hundred people, mostly locals from Kassel, participated. In preparation for this concert, or performance, they organized daily rehearsal moments. With our student group, we joined one of those rehearsals, and this is what we were listening to. As you can hear, the roof tile can basically make only two sounds, like “click” or “clack”. Still, with these two sounds you can make quite a composition... JaF had made a simple graphical musical score that we rehearsed.**

05:00

You can also hear the voice of the conductor. He is a member of Jatiwangi art Factory and was in Kassel back then.



→ img 1-2

05:09

The group that organized the roof tile orchestra is only one part of the bigger Jatiwangi art Factory collective, which consists of, I don't know, forty to forty-five people. It was part of their larger project at documenta fifteen called "The New Rural Agenda". In this project, they want to give new focus and explore the meaning of the countryside and the rural, in all parts of the world, not just in Indonesia...



→ img 3

05:45

But they are themselves based in a rural part of Indonesia, right? In Java, I think, about two hundred kilometers east of Jakarta. Their work with roof tiles and clay is directly related to their home region which is the traditional area of the Indonesian roof tile industry. And I think that's how they came together: the idea was to create an art community for the entire village, working with materials that everyone there was already working with.

06:26

Yeah. The Indonesian roof tile industry reached its peak in the early 20th

century. But around the turn of the millennium, it began to decline due to the use of newer technologies. It was at this point that artists from Jatiwangi decided to start a community art space and work with the roof tile factory workers and their families.

07:01

But in the meantime, I understand that there has been a re-industrialization of this region with new factories coming in. So it's losing that rural village character.

07:12

A new highway has been built there recently, and a new airport nearby. As I've heard from them, a lot of new factories are moving there now, because it's cheaper. There's cheap labor, and cheap land.

07:35

And you were there, right? Because they also have an artist residency program, and you stayed there.

07:50

I've been to Jatiwangi twice. I had met members of Jatiwangi art Factory before, actually here in the Netherlands. That was during "Made in Commons", a collaborative project between Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam and KUNCI, Yogyakarta, which took place in both Amsterdam and Yogyakarta in 2013 and 2014 and in which both JaF and myself participated, among others. During my stay in Indonesia I visited Jatiwangi for a

while, and I participated in one of their festivals, called Panenergi in 2014, which involved thousands of local people. The second time was in 2017 for a short residency. I also stayed with them in their house for several weeks during documenta fifteen in Kassel, to help them out with their workshops, running a food market and other projects.

08:17

But that's the way Jatiwangi art Factory works, to have both the local activities and to bring in international artists as residents?

08:25

Yes. At some point they redesigned their whole compound and made more space for more people to come and visit – an artists' residency. There's a museum of terracotta art, there's a project space, a radio station, a music studio and so on.

08:45

I also understood that many festivals and rituals are performed for the village community.



→ img 4

08:54

With the village community, I would say. It's something that they initiate, but it's already being done in the community. I mean, they do work a lot with the local workers and the local villagers. In all their projects

<sup>1</sup> The term "addressed public" (in Indonesian: Publik yang beralamat), coined by one of JaF's founders, Arief Yudi Rahman, refers to the people whom JaF know closely; not only by demographic facts, but also by their names, their relatives, where they went to school, where they work, and even the addresses of their homes.

**they involve what they call the “addressed public”,<sup>1</sup> people who live nearby and whom they personally know very well.**

09:19

**This includes the Roof Tile Orchestra, which originally came from the village community where there is a roof tile music festival once every year. Would it be fair to say that the idea is to have art that is very accessible and where the difference between artists and participants, or makers and audiences, is more or less dissolved?**

09:50

**These performances and community meetings in Jatiwangi – like the one I participated in – involve a few thousand people, which is quite impressive. You can watch the videos on YouTube, it's really quite cool. Despite JaF's effort at documenta fifteen, only a few hundred people joined. Maybe people were a bit shy. Of course it's also harder to find an “addressed public” in a new place.**



→ img 5

10:21

**When we listened to the piece, there were not thousands of people in the group, but around fifteen. It still means that you need a certain hierarchy between an artist who makes the concept, someone who writes the score and conducts, and the participants who**

end up being performers executing a score that the artists have thought up. So isn't there still a hierarchy between the artists and the audience? Even if the artists are working more in the style of curators or designers of events, aren't they still in charge of them?

10:59

**They're responsible for directing the score, directing the format. And also directing the framework within which everyone operates. But I would say it's a different kind of directing, not like a theater director directing actors.**

11:31

**How is it different? How would you characterize that?**

11:36

**Well, I think it's much more open. For example, mistakes are not a problem. It's not about creating a perfect score or a perfect musical composition, it's about being together and doing it as a group. And when you have a lot of people involved, you really feel the community vibe.**

11:58

**Yes. And you do not really have individual artist signatures. Jatiwangi art Factory itself is quite a large collective, forty-five people, you said. And the idea is that all their activities, in their different formats, are collectively organized.**

12:24

**As far as I've understood, they organize themselves into different groups within the collective. There's a group**

that works with music, with sound recordings, for example, but there's also a group that works with ceramics.

There's another group that works with food, or sculptural pieces, or maintaining a communal plot of land and so on...

12:48

Jatiwangi art Factory doesn't seem to be just an umbrella under which people put their individual signatures. It's all done under the collective identity of JaF, right?



→ img 6

13:05

The overlapping, overarching theme is the Indonesian word 'tanah', which has multiple meanings in English: dirt or soil; land, ground or country, as well as earth. Everything JaF does is related to tanah. But there are many ways to work within this framework.

NON-  
COM-  
MERCIAL

BREAK:  
All-in  
summer  
camp  
in Kassel -  
over 45  
people  
and

# only one toilet

13:37

**We have already talked about how this was transported to Documenta and Kassel in Germany. Not all of our listeners may know that Documenta Kassel is a one-hundred-day event, more than three months. Including the preparations, this meant that these forty-five people had to live in Kassel for a long time. How did that work?**

14:01

**Of these forty-five people, at least around thirty came to Kassel. They also invited a lot of people to a summit they organized during the first week of documenta fifteen. During this New Rural Summit many people from all over the world discussed, talked, met and performed around notions of the rural. All these people stayed in JaF's accommodation. The members of Jatiwangi art Factory lived together in an abandoned building in Kassel, the former offices of a factory that had gone out of business. This factory space\* was part of Documenta's**

\*Hübner Areal

**exhibition in the east of Kassel, in a somewhat run-down industrial area.**



→ img 7-8

15:00

**But then the question is, does it work at all? Because we just reconstructed how, what Jatiwangi art Factory are doing in their community and in their village is very local and culturally specific. But if you then do the same activities, like the Roof Tile Orchestra, and you bring them to Kassel, does that really make sense?**

15:19

**Yes, that's the question. Most of them stayed for about three months. They stayed that long to really connect with the communities in Kassel. They arrived in Kassel a month or two before the opening of documenta fifteen. In fact, most of them wanted to stay much longer, for the whole one hundred days of Documenta, but they couldn't because their visas expired after ninety days. This meant that they had to leave about halfway through documenta fifteen.**

15:45

**Yes, that's perhaps the dirty secret of documenta fifteen, known only to those who know the stories behind the scenes. Although all these artist collectives from all over the world were invited, and although documenta fifteen lasts longer than three months,**

with its one hundred days, most of the invited artists only had ninety-day tourist visas, many of them even less. I found that quite scandalous. We were both in the house where the people from Jatiwangi art Factory were staying. It was a tiny house for more than twenty people at that time, whole families with children, with only one toilet and one tiny kitchen for all of them. I mean, the Human Rights Commission probably wouldn't tolerate that as a refugee shelter.

16:43

It was interesting that Documenta also advertised this to a certain extent... It was announced that artists from the Global South would be coming to Europe. First of all, as you mentioned, these artists had a lot of difficulties with visas. That was a big problem for a lot of people. Then there was the question of accommodation. As a German, you know that housing regulations in Germany are very strict. But suddenly it seemed possible to live in a factory, a place that was not meant for living, of course. That would have caused problems in many countries, and I imagine it would have caused even more problems in Germany. Another collective, Gudskul, even lived in a museum. So you ask yourself, how is it possible for fifty or sixty people

to live in a museum? In makeshift dormitories, in a big hall, in bunk beds. It was the same with Jatiwangi art Factory. I wouldn't say they didn't have a really good time. They even saw it as a nice place for them to live. But for me, I had some questions about the circumstances of how this was done. And I wondered what would have happened if it had been, let's say, an artists' collective from the West that had been transported to somewhere in the... makes gesture **Global South...**

18:11

...yeah, a shitty term...

18:14

...to Indonesia, for example. Would those artists accept that? Especially when you look at the very tiny kitchen and the very tiny bathroom they all had to share. Transporting a very local practice to a very different cultural context in Kassel is not so obvious. It's difficult in many ways, and it's even more difficult to bring over forty people. How do you accommodate them and where?



→ img 9-11

18:44

This was my experience, too, because – full disclosure – I was also involved in the workshop program in the same area for two days. We were also hosted by Jatiwangi art Factory, but we came with two other collectives, Hackers &

**Designers from Amsterdam and 展銷場 Display Distribute from Hong Kong. These workshops took place in the factory building in the same area. In the building, there were some video documentaries of Jatiwangi art Factory's activities in their hometown. In our workshop, we made a collective zine about documenta fifteen with the visitors who came in, some of whom really took the time to engage with it. And from our conversations with them, we learned that pretty much all the information in the video was lost on them. It was not clear enough. We in the workshop basically had to explain this whole part of documenta fifteen and what the collective practice of Jatiwangi art Factory was. So maybe that was also a problem, that all these collective community-oriented practices were very difficult to transport from their specific local environments, contexts and meanings to Kassel.**

**Documenta was founded in the post-war period of the 1950s on the idea of abstract modernist art as a universal language. You could say it was based on an idea of radical non-locality and radical universality, even deterritorialization.<sup>2</sup> And maybe documenta fifteen was the first Documenta that actually broke with**

2 In cultural anthropology, deterritorialization means an increasing disconnect between a culture and its place of origin. In response to the German National Socialist “blood and soil” cultural politics with its emphasis on territoriality – that is, on culture originating in, and embodying, a particular nation and territory – postwar West German art discourse embraced Western modernism and its rejection of locally specific culture. In the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, deterritorialization also denotes “the movement by which one leaves a territory”, where “territory” refers not only to a geographical territory, but more generally to social relations.

that paradigm. Previous editions like Documenta 11, curated by Okwui Enwezor, challenged universalism by focusing on postcolonial issues, among other things, but all the artists were classically (and mostly Western-) trained artists who spoke and worked in the international idiom of the white cube museum and gallery art. This was also true of the video art that dominated Documenta 11.

But now, at documenta fifteen, I thought that this founding concept of Documenta had completely collapsed. What was actually needed was some kind of teleportation device to take the audience to the original locations of the participating collectives and their practices, whether in Indonesia, Ghana, Thailand, or Taiwan.

Would you agree?

21:22

It's hard to say because yes, of course, you cannot transport something like Jatiwangi art Factory, or other hyper-local collectives, into another location. It's not possible. At the same time, I think the artists made a huge effort to do the best that they could, to engage with local people, to introduce their ways of working to local communities in Kassel. ruangrupa did this as well. Two members of ruangrupa moved to Kassel two years before documenta

fifteen started in order to understand the local context and to become embedded in it. And I think, compared to most exhibitions, or the big biennials, or editions of Documenta that you see in general, documenta fifteen genuinely engaged with a lot of local communities. The question is: how long will that last after these one hundred days are over? What will happen after that?

I think the real question is, whether it is even possible to do all of this within these one hundred days, with this huge budget? For sure, I wouldn't say it was a failure. But it was an interesting experiment. For ruangrupa and their lumbung concept, it was important to engage with a local community, with the local crowds, and to connect with them. For me, there was a kind of crucial, even visual intersection. Literally I mean: the intersection in front of the ruruHaus. If you've been to Kassel, then you know that the ruruHaus. was the place on the corner of Friedrichsplatz where you bought the tickets for documenta fifteen. There were two streams of people; one that went from North to South from the train station, towards the Museum Friedericianum. And there was another flow of people going from East to West and vice versa. These were the people

going down Königsstraße, the main shopping street in Kassel; the local people of Kassel who were just going to the local shops around there to buy their stuff. It was interesting to watch this, because you saw this intersection of people who didn't really connect. For me, that was a visual representation of how documenta fifteen really functioned or maybe didn't function. This particular intersection, in terms of imagery, was perhaps the key to this Documenta...



→ img 12-13

# NON- COMM- MERCIAL BREAK:

a com-  
mons,  
supported  
with  
42  
Million  
Euro –  
what could

# ever go wrong?

24:21

...the takeaway? You used the word lumbung. And perhaps it is a word that we need to explain. It is an Indonesian word that was used as a motto for documenta fifteen, by ruangrupa. It also seems to me that maybe this word has not been well communicated...

24:41

You think it wasn't?

24:45

It was always explained, but only as the Indonesian word for a collective rice barn. But what hasn't been so well explained is that it is in fact the Indonesian equivalent of the word "commons". One way of translating it would have been to simply say that this edition of Documenta is about commons and commons practices.

25:08

Yeah, the lumbung is a real, physical thing. A communal storage place for rice.

25:15

Yes. But in Dutch, for example, we have the old word "meent" – in German "Allmende". The meent is also a physical place, a collectively owned and

**used piece of agricultural land.  
Which is the most classical type of  
a commons...**

25:23

**You could say that “lumbung” is the Indonesian version of the commons. I thought that ruangrupa chose this word very cleverly, because “lumbung” has a resonance in the German language. It almost sounds like a German word, like “Übung”, “Bildung”, “Haltung” and those kinds of words. Right? I think you could say that “lumbung” is the commons, in a way. And maybe, if you look at it from a more political perspective, you could say that lumbung is a kind of exoticization of that word, the commons, isn’t it? Or even a form of Orientalism. But it can also be seen as branding...**

26:33

**Yes! And that’s the danger of it, that it becomes an art world branding like “relational aesthetics”.<sup>3</sup>**

3 Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*. Les presses du réel, 2002.

26:37

**Yeah, that’s a danger. But lumbung is also a word that’s easy for a lot of people to understand, I think – because of the way ruangrupa explain it, and the way it’s visualized in all their mappings and their graphics. If you went to documenta fifteen, you couldn’t have missed it, because they were everywhere. I think it’s easier to understand than the “commons”, because the**

**“commons” is more of an abstract concept, whereas for ruangrupa lumbung is a practice, a way of living and working together. Something that changes dynamically through the interactions that take place. Incidentally, the “commons” wasn’t mentioned in any of the documenta fifteen communications.**



→ img 14

27:01

**Yes, indeed. But on the other hand, you also saw in the way documenta fifteen was perceived, especially by art critics and the media, that exactly what you described as Orientalism and exoticization was in full force. It was a massive othering of the whole event. Of course, documenta fifteen had the aspect of postcolonial culture and site-specificity for Second/Third World countries, such as Indonesia.<sup>4</sup>**

**But on the other hand, ruangrupa, who were the organizers – I wouldn’t call them curators – of documenta fifteen, came from the Indonesian punk subculture. And if you look at the organizing principles of documenta fifteen, they’re actually not that different from how, for example, squatter and punk self-organized culture works in the West. It’s just very alien to the art system, with its white cubes, with**

<sup>4</sup> I am sticking to the notions of the “First World”, “Second World” and “Third World” following Radhika Desai who suggests that, after 1990, they have been reconfigured from political blocks to the countries where (1) commodities get designed, (2) commodities get manufactured and (3) commodities get disposed.

its curators, with its idea of a top-down selection of artists and artworks, and with its idea of what is quality art.

In Kassel, ruangrupa worked with a lot of local initiatives, many of which came from subcultural and activist backgrounds. And in those communities, there was an immediate understanding and click with ruangrupa, because if you're – for example – a punk hanging out in an autonomous community center, or a skater coming from hip-hop culture, then you immediately understood what documenta fifteen and its ideas were all about: a community model of making art, and art as a life practice. That it's not about going to an exhibition and looking at artworks, but about a lived practice that includes common and everyday life – without aestheticizing it like the Western romanticist tradition.

28:52

Yes. ruangrupa was founded in 2000, during the political reforms after the Suharto dictatorship, which ended in 1998. It was definitely a reaction to what had happened under Suharto. And it was also a way of surviving, of joining forces. Like the collective Taring Padi, whose work has caused a lot of controversy, which we probably shouldn't talk about too much, because it already overshadowed

**this Documenta. But Taring Padi came out of the uprisings against the dictatorship...**

29:39

**Taring Padi were the subject of the anti-semitism controversy around documenta fifteen, to name it and not to silence it. I think there's a lot to be said about that, a lot of critique to be made of this work by Taring Padi. In general, I had my difficulties with their work, because it was classic agitprop visual art. And that's why they attracted this attention. If, for example, ninety percent of Documenta is community workshops, and you only have a few classical visual art works, then they end up getting all the attention.**

**That is a problem...**

30:24

**...but that was the purpose of these works. Every Documenta, or any big exhibition for that matter, needs an eye-catcher. Something instagrammable.**

30:26

**Of course! But then you end up with a very traditional concept of art. But another aspect is that the reason why anti-semitic motifs ended up on their paintings was because they used an open participatory process for making them, where they didn't fully control who was contributing, what was actually going on, and what ended up on these paintings. Which, in turn,**

reminded me strongly of my own past in 1980s post-punk culture and 1990s collective-anonymous projects where similar things happened – including, for example, the participation of hipster fascists whose contributions were mistaken for campy transgression. Or today, in internet meme culture. This is what happens when you have open participatory processes, when you experiment with radical collectivity. It means you give up control and shit – including bad shit – happens.

But that doesn't fit with the expectations of an audience that expects everything in a show like this to be filtered, to have gone through curatorship.

Okay, maybe we should take a break now. Or we can have a nong-krong, which is the Indonesian word for chit-chatting or aimlessly hanging out. We have a playlist of music. And maybe we need to make a decision now, because we could either play something from the larger Roof Tile Symphony and how it is performed in Jatiwangi with these thousands of people, or we could alternatively listen to music experiments that have come out of Western collectives.

One of them is the Banana School from Copenhagen, who both of us have

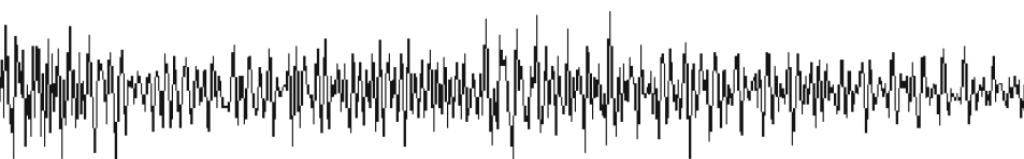
**worked with in the past. They just released an album on the partly Rotterdam-based label Futura Resistenza. It's called "The Pruttipal Index". The other track is from a network of experimental schools in France called Freinet. An artist collective here in Rotterdam, Woodstone Kugelblitz, has reissued some of these recordings that were made in the 1970s and 1980s.**

33:09 **Maybe if our listeners call in now. People who know us can call us, otherwise I vote Banana School.**

33:29 **Let's play something quite experimental from Banana School for six minutes.**



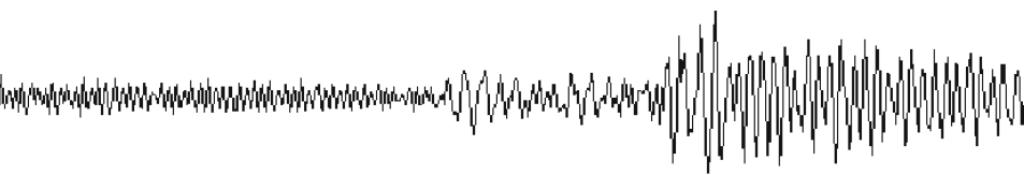


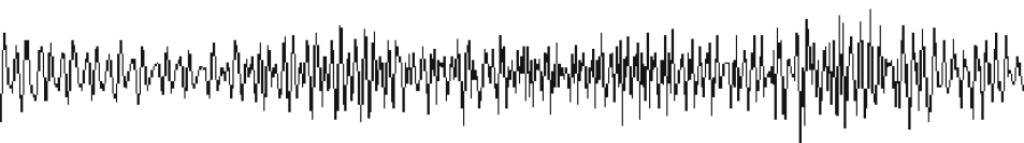


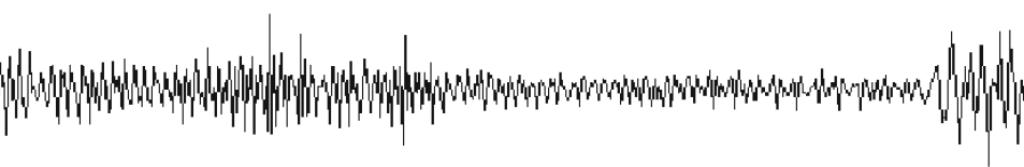








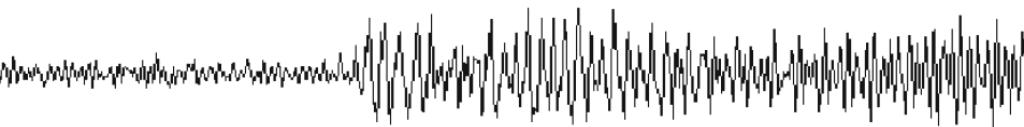


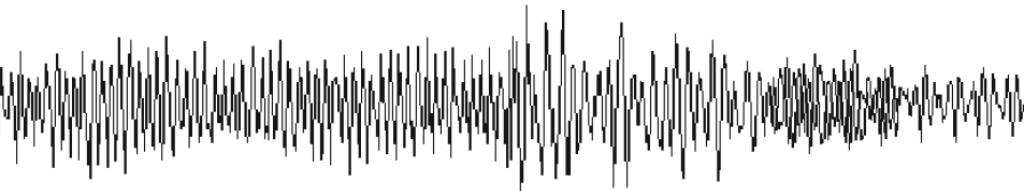




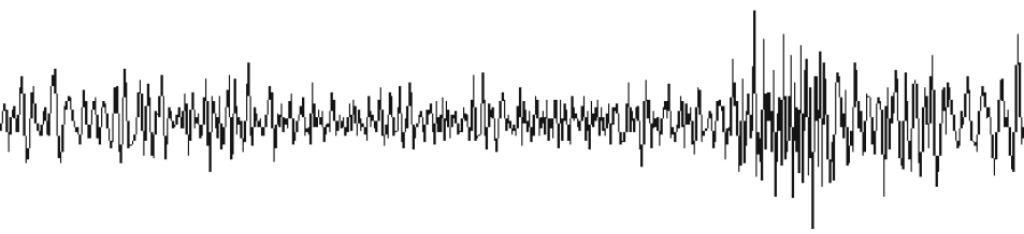


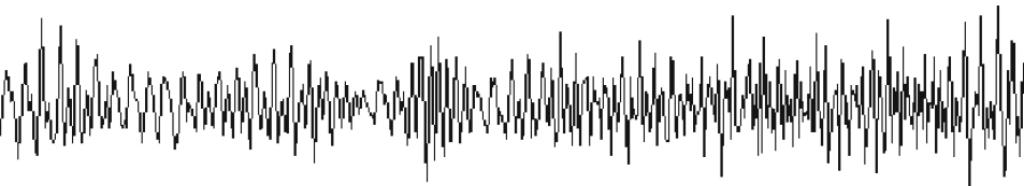












**What we just heard was GP & PLS, also known as Goodiepal & Pals, also known as the Banana School collective from Copenhagen. It's a band, it's a musical collective, it's an artist and activist collective that uses dance as an activist tool, among others against the deportation of refugees at airports. They're also involved in smuggling refugees across the EU border in Serbia.**

40:20

**Can you say this on public radio?**



→ img 15

40:25

**I think it's public knowledge. It's not a secret. Part of their practice is to have collective musical performances.**

**The male voice we heard in the last piece was, I think a refugee member of the collective. We also heard from a child, Kat, Goodiepal's and Nynne Pedersen's daughter, in between.**

**If you're a little bit familiar with their work, you know that this music is very interwoven with their everyday practice. These are the melodies and songs they use in their activism, among others.**

41:05

**Right, we've been talking about Documenta for half an hour, but Goodiepal & Pals and the Banana School were not part of it, at least not officially. Why do you think this is important? Is it related to lumbung, for example?**

41:23

Yeah, I think there's a similar idea of the commons. For example, the first time I saw Goodiepal in Rotterdam, at De Player, about fifteen years ago, you paid five Euros to get in, but you got ten Euros back. I also met him at a festival in Berlin where he gave away all his belongings. He sat in the middle of everything he owned. And you could take anything you wanted on the condition that you watched a video and had a conversation with him. Later he transformed himself from a solo artist into a collective and finally gave up his name. So you don't even find his name officially on this album.

For me, this is very much in line with the ideas of documenta fifteen and would have fit in there. – I'm sorry, I should have said that they were actually part of documenta fifteen in a way, because the female voice that we heard, Nynne, who is one of the founding members of the collective, is now the director of Trampoline House, and Trampoline House was one of the core collectives that ruangrupa invited to documenta fifteen.

43:07

So do you think that not accepting ownership or giving up ownership, like property ownership, is an essential part of lumbung?

We'd have to ask ruangrupa, but I think it's definitely part of the idea of the commons to give up conventional notions of property and ownership. I think this also applies to ruangrupa. I know that originally, they wanted free access, without tickets, for everyone at documenta fifteen, but couldn't convince Documenta's organization. That's the whole idea. And I think this is also where we have to be very critical of contemporary art practices that use the commons as a kind of fashionable term. I think if you claim to be working for the commons but you don't talk about ownership, you don't address property, you don't have an alternative vision or practice for it, then you end up with a pseudo-commons.

The worst example I know of was a project in Amsterdam by architects where they created a so-called commons as part of a real estate development project. Of course, you could say that's what always happens, that concepts get appropriated, mainstreamed, and watered down. But perhaps the strength of the concept of the commons is that it is actually an alternative model of ownership and property, which conversely amounts to a hard criterion for whether something is a commons project or

not. But there are also question marks about documenta fifteen, partly because it included this so-called Lumbung Gallery. And that was quite controversial...



→ img 16

## The Lumbung Kiosk?

I actually mean a different project, the Lumbung Gallery, which was more controversial than the kiosk, because the idea of selling work *per se* is not necessarily the issue. The Lumbung Gallery, however, was run by the Swiss art non-profit organization TheArtists who had a model for artists to sell art works in rather conventional gallery ways.<sup>5</sup> It was based on a different model of sharing the profits compared to how galleries are usually run, with seventy percent of sales going to the individual artists and thirty percent ending up in a collective pot. But it didn't propose any alternative ownership or property model, and was still based on the idea of collector art.

5 <https://www.theartists.net/Documenta-fifteen>

45:30

I don't know enough about it. I know that ruangrupa and documenta fifteen tried to experiment with a lot of things, including more commercial ways of dealing with art. Some more successfully than others.

On the Documenta website and in the public programme you could read that all these collectives were involved, but in fact they're presented as if they were solo artists, right? So it reproduces these all too familiar ways of the art system. And then not only does lumbung become a brand, but Jatiwangi Art Factory becomes a brand, all these collectives become their own brands...



→ img 17

46:17

...and ruangrupa have been ranked number one in ArtReview's Power 100 art world ranking for 2022 – but probably only because of their appointment as Documenta's curators...

NON-  
COM-  
MERCIAL

# BREAK: Never Forget Power & Politics

46:23

**If you were to conceptualize an event like documenta fifteen in an even more radical way, would you need all these names? Could you just bring all these people together for one big, joyful, festive summer? A celebration of the commons without branding or top-down framing?**

But I think it's interesting to navigate all these difficult structures, because of course Documenta, as you mentioned, has had a very political

agenda since its inception in the post-war period. And of course there's a lot of money involved, which makes it even more difficult. So there are a lot of agendas juxtaposed, sometimes contradictory and conflicting.

47:05

And with Documenta, one really needs to understand that it is not at all metaphorical to call it a state art event. It actually is a state art event, with politicians directly involved in its governance.

47:21

After the Taring Padi controversy, there was a lot of pressure and political attacks on local, regional and even national politicians.

You mentioned something earlier about how art critics talked about documenta fifteen, right? Basically, and this is very rough, you could say that there were two sides. One side focused on the Taring Padi controversy and everything that happened around the anti-semitism accusations. Then there were a lot of people – not really the German critics, to be honest –, but international art critics who were very enthusiastic about documenta fifteen. A lot of strong words and phrases were used, such as: “A new vibe!” “A game changer!” “A paradigm shift!”

48:24

48:27

## Especially the American critics.<sup>6</sup>

**When there was a meeting at De Appel, Amsterdam, a few months ago, with a talk by ruangrupa about lumbung, “paradigm shift” was a phrase that kept popping up. Obviously a lot of people perceive it as such. But interestingly, when you talk to the artists, the people in the communities that were flown in, on the ground in Kassel, they all said the same thing: we are not doing anything new. This is what we've always done. We're cooking, we're gathering, we're hanging out. We're doing some workshops, gardening and so on. This has been going on for ages. It was quite interesting how this Documenta was perceived here, especially by the Western art world. Because it's seen as something very radical, a radical break with the Western, German, Dutch paradigm of art...**



→ img 18

49:19

**...but only because of the institutional stage of Documenta. If the cooking had just happened in Jatiwangi, no one would have used those words. It's all about the context.**

49:34

**I thought it was an interesting: how do**

<sup>6</sup> Among others, in *Art Forum*, *New York Times* and *ARTnews*: Burke, Harry. “Harry Burke on Documenta 15”, *Artforum*. <https://www.artforum.com/print/reviews/202207/harry-burke-on-Documenta-15-88957>. Accessed 25 July 2023. Mitter, Siddhartha. “Documenta Was a Whole Vibe. Then a Scandal Killed the Buzz.” *The New York Times*, 24 June 2022. *NYTimes.com*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/24/arts/design/Documenta-review.html>. Nguyen, Minh. “Friendship and Antagonism: Documenta 15”. *ARTnews*, 2 Aug. 2022, <https://www.artnews.com/art-in-america/aia-reviews/Documenta-15-review-lumbung-ruangrupa-1234635632>

people talk about it? For me, what was a paradigm shift, maybe even groundbreaking for such a prestigious event, was this huge gray area where it was completely unclear whether people were actually part of documenta fifteen or not. You have to understand that ruangrupa invited a lot of collectives. Those collectives invited other collectives. And these collectives invited even more collectives, and probably more and more and more. So at some point it became completely unclear whether people were officially part of Documenta or not. And that initiated a gray area where people were doing a lot of things that were sometimes known, sometimes visible, sometimes unknown, sometimes invisible, sometimes announced, sometimes not announced. That's quite unusual, isn't it? In an exhibition you're either supposed to be part of it or you're not, you're either supposed to be part of Documenta or you're not supposed to be part of Documenta...

But to spill the beans a little bit, there was a distinction of being officially a lumbung artist. Which meant that you got a passport, first of all, to freely enter documenta fifteen. You could also freely use public transport in Kassel. I know this because I happened

to be a lumbung artist myself laughing,  
because I was in this larger orbit...

There were lumbung artists who were official artists and who did some performances. For example, there was a performance by a mountain monk. He dug a hole in the ground somewhere in the north of Kassel, in a little garden, and then stayed in that hole for, I think, five days without food as a radical meditation. And then came out again, in this whole meditative and performative procedure, or whatever. Only a very small group of people were invited to witness this, twenty or so. It was not even announced. It was very special. I was actually lucky enough to be there.

These lumbung artist passes that you were talking about, they were shared among people. Officially they were for one person only, but people were sharing them. Hotel rooms that were booked for the artists were shared with other people. At some point, neither the Documenta organization nor anyone else had any idea who was using which passes and which rooms... Perhaps not surprisingly, with over 1500 artists supposedly taking part.

There was a local man from Kassel who always wore the pass of

one of the Indonesian artists who had lent it to him. The pass gave him access to all the workshops at documenta fifteen, many of which included food. So he had free meals every day!

It was quite interesting to see where the official boundaries of Documenta ended and the informal ones began.

52:36 Yes, and of course this is also part of the idea of inclusivity and giving up control...

52:45 ...yes, and letting things happen – distributed curatorial control.



→ img 19

52:48 Yes. But what I'm still wondering, and this is perhaps an elephant in the room, especially for a Western audience, is, well, how is this different from what has been done in art pedagogy and socio-cultural community art for a very long time? Almost as far back as you can think, or at least since the 1960s? Where you seemingly have the same idea: you create events, you create platforms, social contexts where basically everyone can participate. And where you lower the threshold of participation to the absolute minimum. I mean, that's what you learn when you study art pedagogy, at

a Western art school, in the programs that train school teachers to give art classes. Right?

53:31 Yes... I remember reading that in one of the articles, where one of the critics wrote that documenta fifteen consisted of the perfect NGO-funded art<sup>7</sup> to promote community work. I think that's a simplification of what happened...

53:52

7 The World's Most Prestigious Art Exhibition Is Over. Maybe Forever. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/23/arts/design/Documenta-15.html> (accessed August 31, 2023).

DID Documenta WORK? Reflections on Kassel Before the Last Days by Andrew Berardini, Övül Ö. Durmusoglu, Edwin Nasr, Mohammad Salemy, & Nathalie von Veh <https://www.spikeartmagazine.com/?q=articles/did-Documenta-work> (Accessed August 31, 2023).

If I had to formulate an answer to this question, I would say that the problem may be that most art pedagogy is rather mainstream because it often tries to reach people at the lowest common denominator. It is also very harmless. In most cases it is not radical. It does not propose to change society, but it is concerned with inclusion and participation in existing society. What I still see as a difference in such practice, not only at documenta fifteen, but this is why we brought in Goodiepal & Pals, is if you look at such commons-oriented, communal practices in the arts, then I also see utopian moments in them: the idea, for example, of experimenting with different forms of living, with different ideas of what society could be, even what politics could be, all of which also have aesthetic implications.

For example, if you listen to the last pieces of music that we played, yes, there are popular, catchy songs in them, but they also have an experimental character that I think is connected to the experimental social character of Goodiepal & Pals' work. It is part of a larger, collective, open-ended experiment. And that's quite different from, you know, just doing creativity workshops for kids in the neighborhood to improve social cohesion, wouldn't you agree?

55:34

Yeah, I don't think you can underestimate the joy. I mean, there was a lot of love and fun and joy and good vibes. What ruangrupa did wasn't something that was brought top-down into a community or a neighborhood. It was also done without those intentions of improvement, although...

56:18

Maybe that's the danger, right? It's the danger of these practices that they end up becoming neighborhood repair programs or something similar. And here I am not only thinking about art education, but also about social design. I wonder what would have happened, for example, if we had thought of documenta fifteen, with all its collective practices, all its workshops and activities, not as art, but as social design. If it had been called a

## **social design festival, what would have been the implications?**



→ img 20

56:57

56:57

### **So what do you think?**

I know a good example of social design from Rotterdam. Maybe I can look it up quickly, because I didn't prepare this, but I have a web browser in front of me. You know, Rotterdam has this very problematic history of social design projects. Especially for international audiences, you have to explain that Rotterdam in the Netherlands has always had the image of an underprivileged and socially troubled city, with an underclass population that supposedly needs to be educated and socially uplifted. And on that basis, social workers and designers are periodically commissioned to go into underprivileged neighborhoods to “improve” them. More than ten years ago, in August 2012, there was a group of architects who were commissioned for a project called “Wijkonomie”,<sup>8</sup> which is a Dutch play on the words for “we”, “neighborhood”, and “economy”. This took place in Tarwewijk, a poor neighborhood in the south of Rotterdam. One of the architects in this project – I know him and I even worked with him here at the Willem de Kooning

<sup>8</sup> Deutinger, Theo, “We Don’t Trust You Architects”, TD Architects, August 14, 2012, <http://td-architects.eu/>.

Academy, Theo Deutinger, an Austrian who left Rotterdam after the 2010 financial crisis – did something that I found quite remarkable. He and others were hired for this social design project, but in the end they refused to do it. The statement is still on Theo's website. They wrote the following:

***“Four architects spending two months thinking about Tarwewijk and spending three weeks physically in Tarwewijk does not make any difference. The people of Tarwewijk have seen a lot of people like us come and go. Well educated groups with high flying plans, spreading hope for a prosperous future. When they are gone, life in Tarwewijk is more miserable than before. All expectations and trust by the people of Tarwewijk disappear with the people foreign to the place. Tarwewijk does not need us to know what to do; Tarwewijk knows exactly what to do. Do it yourself Tarwewijk! We propose a project stop, a concept stop and a subsidy stop for initiatives from outside of Tarwewijk. The people of Tarwewijk know how to do things; they know how to start a business, they know how to work around regulations. We trust in the power of the people in Tarwewijk”.***

I think this is the best social design project I have ever read about. You could come to the same conclusion, for example, as an artist collective like the Banana School or the We Are Here Collective and the Take-A-Way collective, to say at some point: we have to stop, because whatever we do ends up making us complicit in a problematic political agenda. And knowing a little bit about the backstory of documenta fifteen, I also know that there were internal discussions among the lumbung artists when all these controversies came up. There were discussions about whether the artists should basically call it off and quit.

1:00:51 What you have just read out could, I think, also be said of Kassel. What remains after this joyous Documenta summer? I don't know, for me – or as an outsider – it's hard to say. Other people might know better. But it is definitely a question. And that Documenta was used for problematic agendas was also clear. I mentioned earlier how the Jatiwangi Art Factory was located in this run-down industrial area...

1:01:28 ...which is now being gentrified...  
1:01:29 ...which of course is now being gentrified. This was part of a clear gentrification agenda by the city that generated

**money for Documenta. I heard that extra money had been made available for documenta fifteen specifically for this purpose; because this was an area that had been overlooked in all previous editions of Documenta, never used. And now suddenly tens of thousands of people are flocking to this area.**



→ img 21

1:02:00 **Yeah. And, of course, it has the typical beauty of an abandoned industrial area...**

1:02:08 **Yes, classic ruin porn. You see this run-down, late-nineteenth-century fantastic factory...**

1:02:16 **...yes, indeed. But, I mean, we haven't solved the question of what the difference is with social design. Was documenta fifteen, or are these other collective art projects, in the end, the same as social design projects? I have a suggestion. Maybe there's a difference, but I could be wrong. And this difference is also addressed in the Tarwewijk project statement. I think the crucial point here is the two months and the people brought in from outside. The typical way a social design project works is this: there's a commissioning party, and designers are brought into a place that they weren't part of. Then for a limited period of time, based on a**

certain budget and pre-defined deliverables, they do a project. Commons-oriented collectives like Jatiwangi art Factory, like Gudskul, like ruangrupa, or the Banana School are not projects in this sense. They did not begin as commissions or jobs to be completed within a certain time. They are site-specific, yes, but not limited in time. They're not just interventions. The idea is not that you go somewhere for a while to fix things and then leave...

1:03:56

**It depends a bit on whether you have the ambition to fix things. Because you can do a lot in two months or a week. I don't mean to solve things. But at least there's the possibility of contributing to something.**

And regarding what you just mentioned, I would say that the commissioning party is also important. Who is this party and what are their intentions? Because ultimately it's a question of following the money. Where is it coming from? And what is the agenda behind it? In the Tarwewijk example this is quite clear...

1:04:29

But it was also clear in Kassel! Perhaps it could be said that this was the tragedy of the commons of documenta fifteen – that it was, in the end – because of the commissioning parties, their

funding and their politics –, only a social design project. You could even say that Documenta as such is a post-war social design project for Kassel, and for Germany as a whole...

1:05:05 What you have just said implies that you have to be in a particular place, space or whatever context for many, many, many years, for a very long time.

# NON- COM- MERCIAL BREAK: Projects are

# dead: long live life-long practices

1:05:17

**Which is the case, for example, with ruangrupa, who have been in Jakarta for more than twenty years. Also Jatiwangi art Factory, but I am not sure...**

1:05:29

**Yes, JaF was founded in 2005.**

1:05:31

**What I meant is that there's no expiration date on a community activity. It will end at some point, but it's not a planned project that stops just because the project is at its predetermined end. There's a difference.**

1:05:47

**There's a difference. There is. But I would argue that the main difference is that there's no commissioning party, no one to say, like: OK, this specific area needs to be redeveloped or this particular community needs to be improved.**

1:05:55

**And it also comes from direct personal involvement, doesn't it?**

1:06:03

**Yes, out of a genuine commitment to the community you're part of. The "addressed public".**

1:06:04

**For example, if you're a professional design agency, it means that you have certain job functions within your team, and people are interchangeable, at least to some degree. So, for example, if you are a social design bureau, and part of your team is a video maker, and that person leaves the team, you would replace that person with another video maker. This is very different from an artist collective where people work on the basis of personal commitment and life practice, and where replacing a member would profoundly change the nature and work of the collective.**

1:06:36

**As I mentioned earlier, it was quite remarkable that two members of ruan-grupa decided to move to Kassel two years before documenta fifteen officially started. They're still living in Kassel and will be staying for at least**

**another year or so. Which, of course, is also a kind of commitment...**

1:06:56 **Yeah, life investment...**

1:06:58 **Yes, exactly! It's not just about making a statement, it's also about doing, it's also about being, and it's also about taking the shit that comes with it. And for sure it will be difficult from time to time. For example, these two members have small children and they've been living in Germany for two years now...**

1:07:00 **...and going to school...**

1:07:26 **...they speak German now. Germany has basically become their new home. That's quite a big move. I thought that level of commitment was very remarkable. It is a very unusual step, I think, in social design projects, but also in the art world, or in any kind of community art project.**



→ img 22

1:07:51 **But on the other hand, there's still the problem that we've seen in the last few decades, for example, that the whole contemporary art system is basically a huge jet set, even if it's just an Easyjet set. But still completely unsustainable. This is also something that documenta fifteen did not solve, right? It was very problematic on that level as well. These are all open questions. I mean,**

these are the really interesting questions that should have been discussed.

Maybe in retrospect we could say that documenta fifteen was this huge collective, practical, everyday experiment in how to actually run a commons? And also how it can go wrong and fail on all sorts of levels and in all sorts of details. But what can you learn from that, right? What can you take away from it? And also, how far can you take this experiment?

1:08:23

**Sure, yeah. And what's a bit of a shame is that the focus on the anti-Semitic imagery made it almost impossible to ask those kinds of questions. There was almost no space left to explore the implications of lumbung or the long and short term effects of these commoning practices. Especially in the media.**

1:09:05

**But maybe, you know, it was a moment of learning in the end. Even though it was terrible, for many people, including those in Germany's Jewish community who were traumatized by it. It was also a horrible experience for all the artists who were under this collective suspicion for the many months they worked and lived there. But it was an important lesson in what happens when you try social experiments, of living differently, in the art system. While at first glance**

**you might think that this system gives you this space, at least more than other existing systems or infrastructures, documenta fifteen taught everyone about its ultimate downsides.**

**For example, if Taring Padi's poster had been at a political demonstration instead of a contemporary art show, there would probably have been an argument, at least in Europe. Which happens all the time: there's a political demonstration, there's a banner, with perhaps the best example being a demonstration in solidarity with the Palestinian people, and that banner would be controversial. I'm a member of an activist group called Doorbraak, and we have a policy that if pro-caliphate, Grey Wolves, or anti-semitic banners show up at demonstrations, we talk to the groups first, and then to the organizers. And if there is no consensus that these banners will be taken down, we leave the demonstration. That would be the classic way to negotiate among activists. And if Taring Padi had marched in a demonstration with that banner, and somebody had pointed out to them, look, you are carrying something that looks terribly like an anti-semitic caricature, then they would probably have been the first to take that banner down.**

**And the case would be over, maybe with some debate afterwards on activist blogs, et cetera.**

**But the art system is still a system that not only expects the production of images, especially on the part of the audience and the media, but where people also have been trained to see images as discursive end products. And then suddenly this image becomes central, iconic and singled out, although it is neither a final statement nor even representative, in its contents and in its aesthetics, of the art practices that characterized documenta fifteen.**

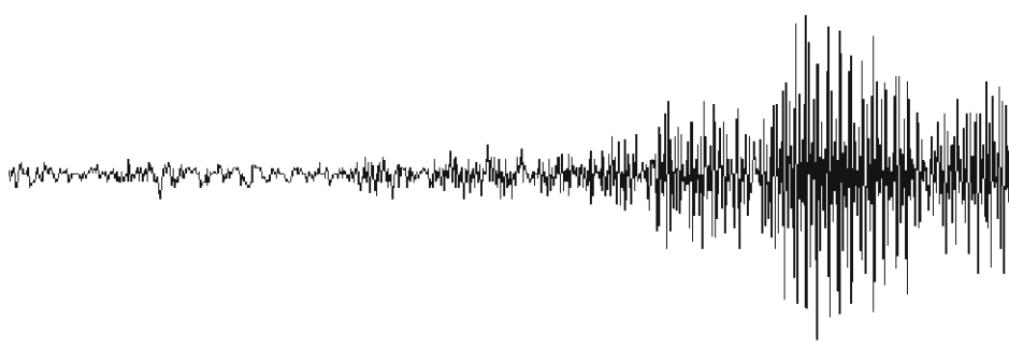
1:11:35 **So, maybe we should play a bit of music...**

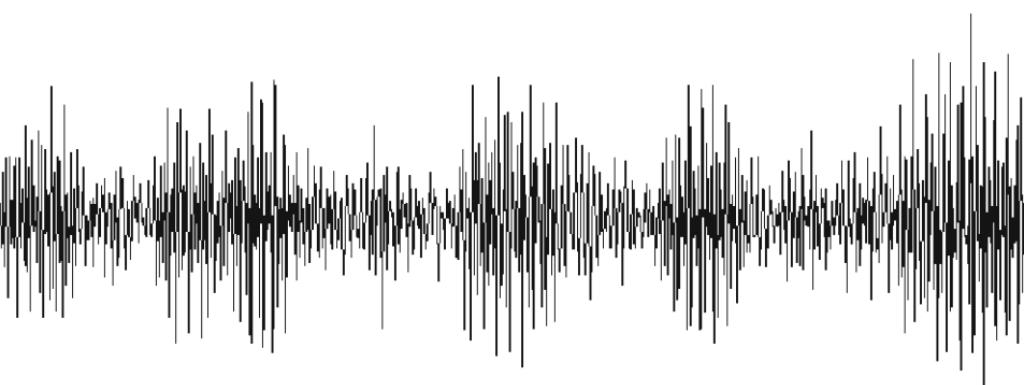
1:11:39 **Yes! It's time to switch to France and experimental school music...**

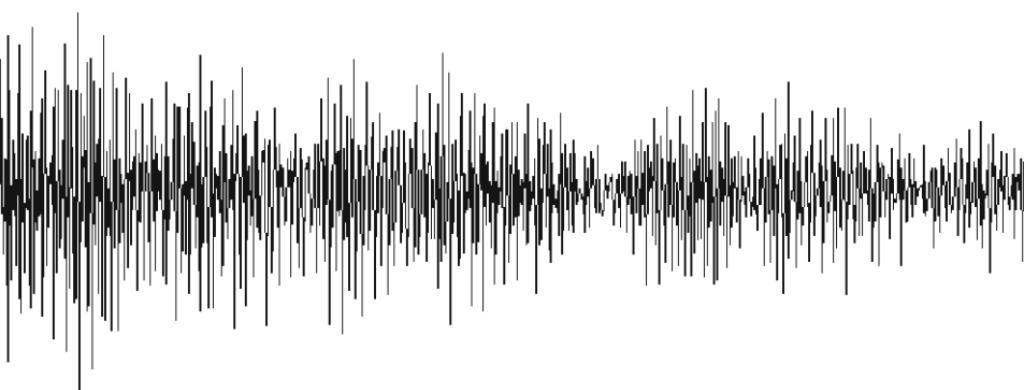
**But we also have the annoying music...**

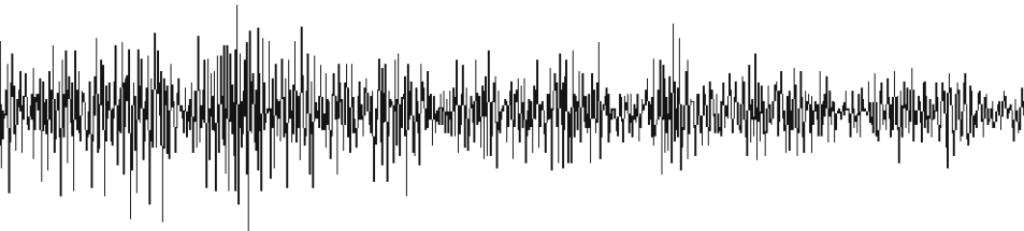
1:11:41 **I suggest that we play the annoying music...**

1:12:01 **We won't say what it is, we will just say that it's annoying...**

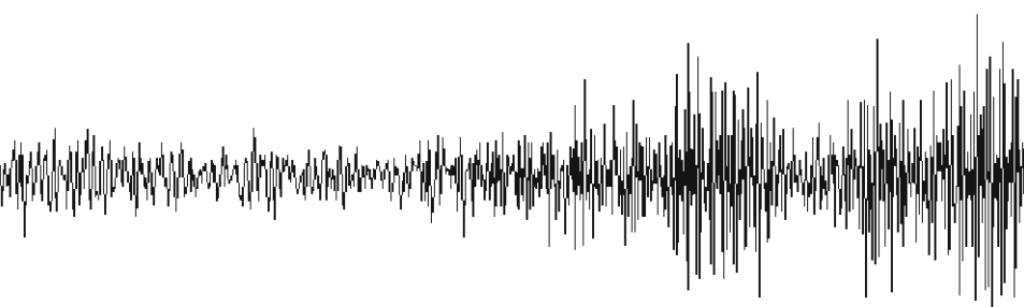


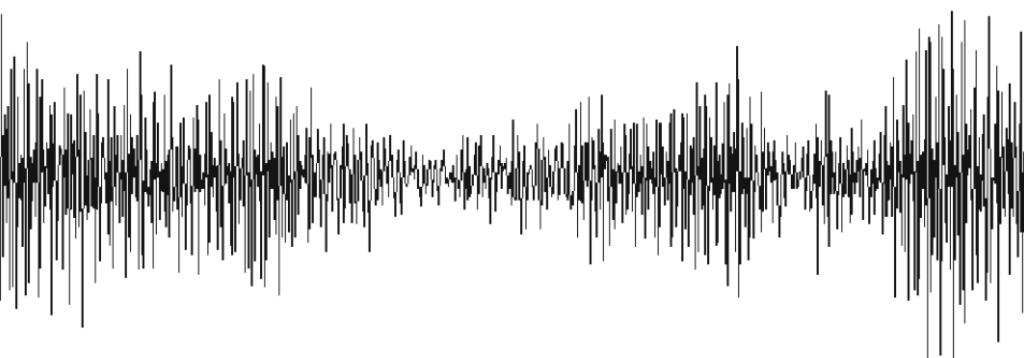


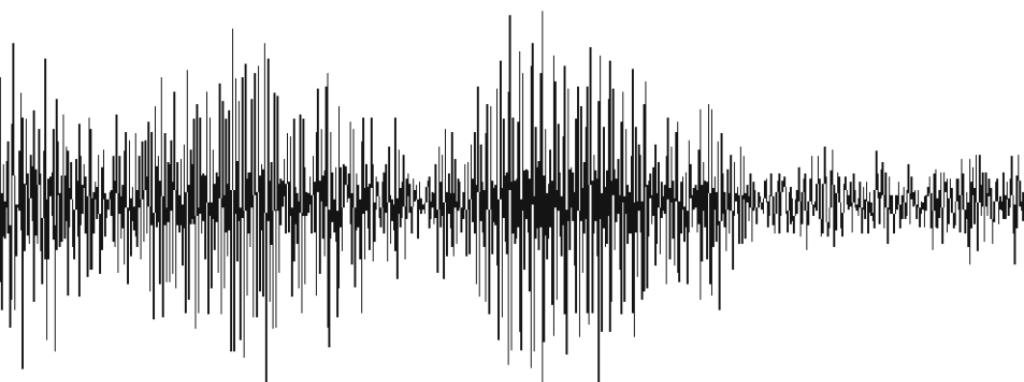


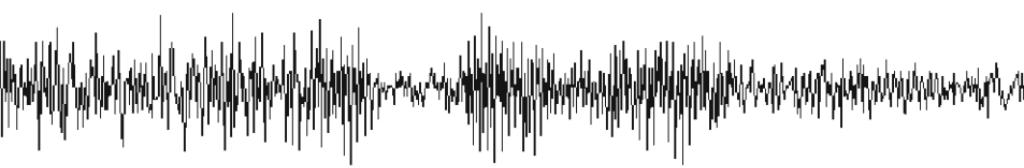


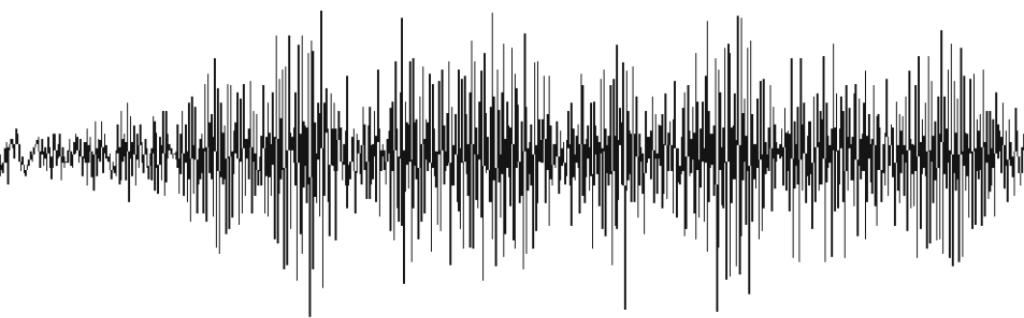


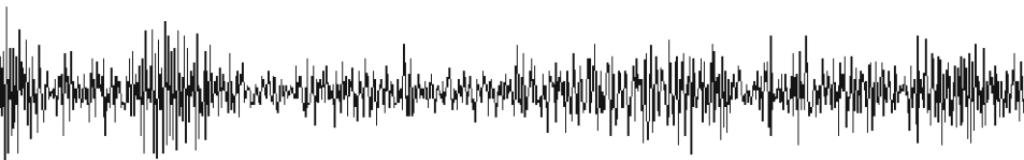




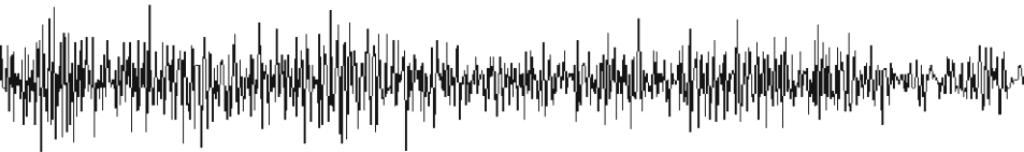






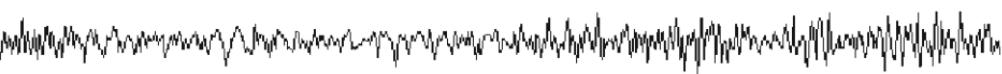












NON-  
COMMERCIAL  
BREAK:  
BRING THE  
ART  
NOT THE  
PEOPLE

We need to be clear that the music itself was not annoying. It's the context that we need to explain here. As I mentioned earlier, Jatiwangi art Factory were staying in a former factory building that was also an exhibition venue called the Hübner Areal. It was one of the largest venues of this Documenta, in this rundown industrial area of Kassel. The former office space, now converted into a house where the people of Jatiwangi art Factory lived, was right next door to the former factory hall, now an exhibition space. The Documenta organization had decided to hang a huge video screen next to the entrance of the exhibition space. On this screen, a film was shown by the FAFSWAG collective from New Zealand. I saw it, it's a really beautiful film. But it was hung outside, right in front of the house, a film of about forty to forty-five minutes. And it just kept playing in a loop. There would be about ten minutes of silence, and then it would start again.

What we just heard was only a very short snippet of the soundtrack of this film. It had a very intense audio track. I had recorded this on my phone, from the windowsill of the Jatiwangi house, to have some sort of memory of it, because it was so intrusive. And so

violent in a way. But you get used to it. I mean, anyone who has been a museum guard knows that art videos loop, and especially the sound gets stuck in your head. You internalize it. But the people of Jatiwangi were living there. They could not escape it. It started every day at ten o'clock in the morning, and went on until nine o'clock at night. It was always on. For example, if we were having a conversation at the dinner table inside, we would have to stop talking because we could not hear ourselves...



→ img 23

1:17:22

...it was like at an airport, near the engines...

1:17:23

It became a running joke, of course, because after a few weeks everyone knew the song by heart, and everyone was singing, humming or dancing along with it in some way. We just made fun of it, because there wasn't much else to do. But at the same time, I thought there was a kind of casual violence to it. Just putting up a screen, without discussing it, without explaining it... Imagine hearing the same song every day for a hundred days, over and over again. I don't think that would be tolerated in any other environment where people live,

especially not in the kind of complaint culture like in Germany and the Netherlands, where people would definitely complain about it. An installation like that would be impossible, because it would drive people crazy.

That was an interesting example. We talked about the toilets and about the kitchens, about how people were housed in these former factory buildings. But then the art, too, the actual works, became part of this casual violence. I'm sure that wasn't the intention of FAFSWAG or ruangrupa, but still. The people from Jatiwangi art Factory didn't speak up, which was remarkable. I don't know exactly why they didn't...

1:19:06

Politeness perhaps.

1:19:07

Politeness, maybe – I would have to ask them. But one visitor I talked to said to me, you know, all this stuff with collectives is very nice, but here, at Documenta, they want the art, but they don't want the people. I thought that was very true. Because they want to see the cool art and experience these cool community projects. But how do you deal with all these people coming from far away countries and needing visas and housing, and maybe a per diem?

**Jatiwangi art Factory, you have to understand, ran out of money. They were staying in Kassel, as one of the main documenta fifteen exhibitors there. But at some point they ran short of money, so they started a market to sell food, to make some extra cash, to be able to support themselves. Their Documenta grant was gone. And still, they organized workshops, still they organized events, music performances, ceramic workshops, and so on. And of course I understand that it was an opportunity for them to be there, right in the center of the art world, where a lot of people are at one time and place. And of course they had a lot of fun. But yeah, when it gets hard to pay for basic living expenses, there's something about it that's pretty uncomfortable.**



→ img 24

1:20:53

**Yes. And maybe we should also explain how events like Documenta work; biennials, too. They actually have rather low budgets for the artists. Because the standard assumption is that if you're an artist and you're invited to Documenta, your art market value skyrockets. And so, in the typical case, your gallerist will pay for your travel to Kassel. This is kind of a**

hidden deal, despite the fact that Documenta costs a lot of money, I think thirty million...

1:21:39 **Forty-two!**<sup>9</sup>

1:21:40

9 According to, among others, Greenberger, Alex. "Why the Art World Descends on a Small German City Once Every Five Years". ARTnews.com, 16 June 2022, [www.artnews.com/art-news/news/what-is-Documenta-why-is-it-important-1234631856](http://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/what-is-Documenta-why-is-it-important-1234631856).

**And it's public money, tax money. But it still mostly goes into the facilities and into maintaining the spectacle. In reality there's very little in it for the artists, because the idea is: you profit with your market value, which of course doesn't work at all, doesn't make any sense, and doesn't even apply to the kind of art practices that were shown there last summer, because they are not gallery art, and there were no gallerists to foot part of the bill.**

**On top of that, the artists stayed there for the whole hundred days, instead of just coming in, making an installation for a week or two, and then going home and letting the exhibition run. Normally, Documenta's budget is supposed to mainly cover the operating costs for keeping the exhibition open, not for hosting the artists.**

1:22:30 **That's the main difference. A lot of visitors to this Documenta were quite surprised to see that the artists were actually present and hanging out in and around their work.**

1:22:38 **Yes. Joseph Beuys did the same in 1977, when he ran his Free International Univer-**

sity in Friedericianum, Documenta's main building, for the entire one hundred days of documenta 6. But that was from an economically privileged position. He was already successful on the art market, so he could afford it. And the students were his followers *Laughs*, they were following their guru. Maybe the question is: is the art system the right system to support commons practices?

1:23:19     **Yeah, I think that's a good question.  
And I would be inclined to say no!**

1:23:23     **Yeah, maybe that's the takeaway,  
right? It's a dire takeaway, but...**

1:23:27     **At least not in the way it's functioning  
at the moment.**

1:23:33     **It will have to radically change, and  
become hospitable to...**

1:23:38     **Yes, but it would require very radical  
changes in terms of funding and  
organization.**

1:23:48     **...and also expectations. Okay, shall we  
end on that dire note? *Laughs***  
**It was a long conversation.  
Thanks to everyone who listened.**

1:24:12     **And thank you for inviting me.  
We should have these conversations  
more often, in casual settings...**

1:24:27     **This is casual, too, only with  
microphones...**

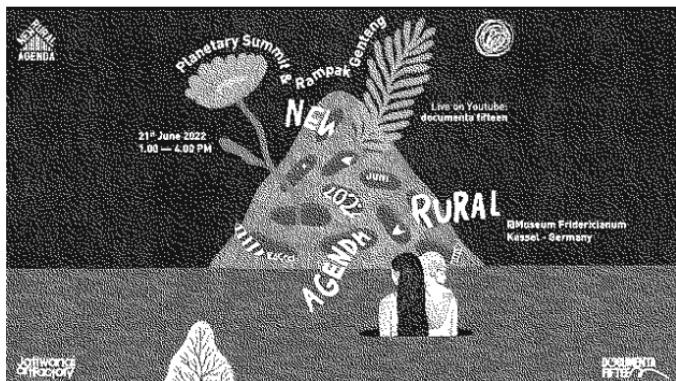


→ img 25



img 1  
group photo Jatiwangi art  
Factory and friends.  
Photo by JaF, used with  
friendly permission

img 2  
picture/logo New Rural  
Agenda by Jatiwangi art  
Factory





img 3  
Jatiwangi, Java, Indonesia  
(map by Open Street Map)

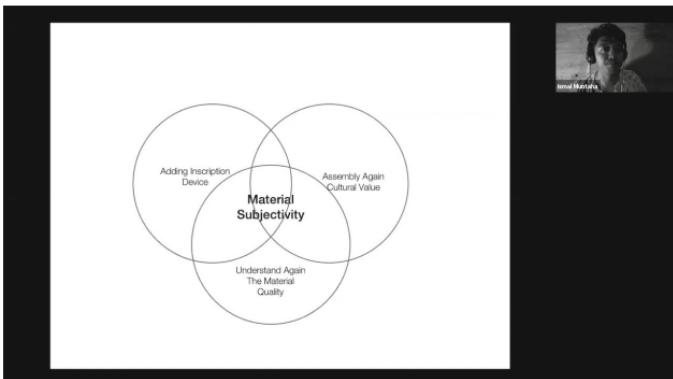
img 4  
Rampak Genteng/Ceramic Roof Tile  
Music festival, Jatiwangi, 2021,  
picture by Jatiwangi art Factory





img 5  
students performing/rehearsing with roof tiles, June 2022, Sandershaus Kassel, still from video by Simon Kentgens

img 6  
picture: JaF drawing/mapping of Tanah, video still from the conference Making Matters, Rotterdam, 2021



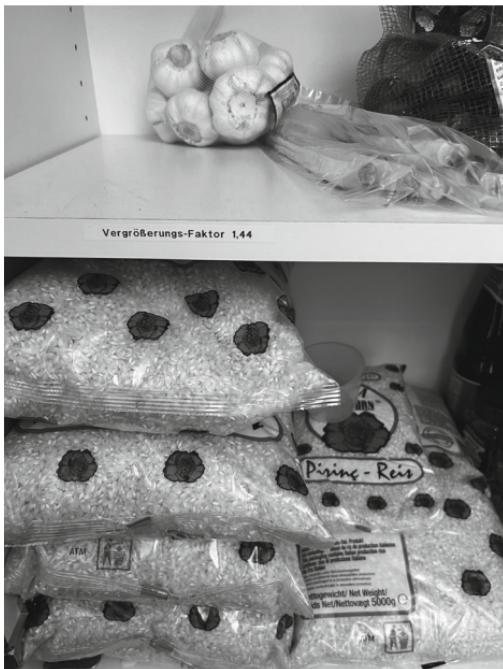


img 7 & 8  
photo Hübner factory /  
JaF house, photos by Florian Cramer



img 9

Food stored in the office cupboards of the former Hübner factory, which served as JaF's house in Kassel during the Documenta. The sticker in the middle reads "enlargement factor 1.44".  
Photo by Simon Kentgens



img 10

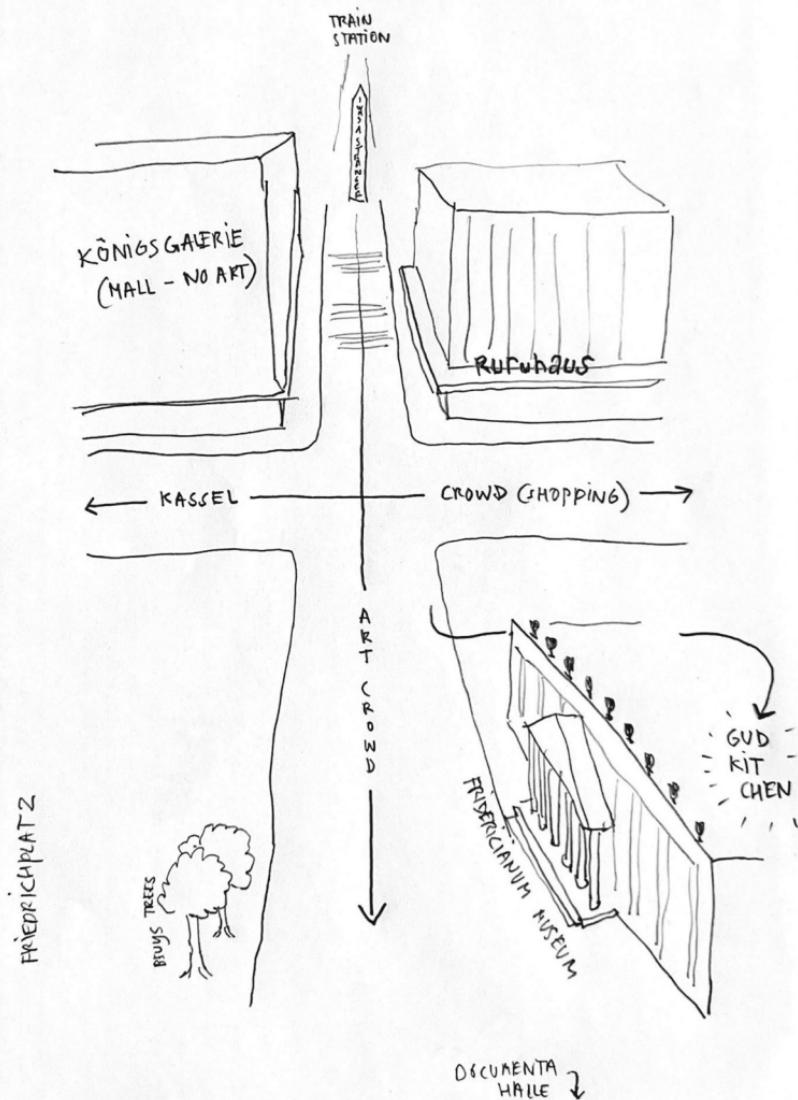
The fire alarm button at the Hübner factory/JaF house covered with an "Indonesia" badge.  
Photo by Simon Kentgens





img 11  
workshop by Hackers &  
Designers and 展銷場 Display  
Distribute at documenta  
fifteen/Hübner Areal,  
July 2022.  
Photo by Florian Cramer

# KASSEL D15



img 12  
 Drawing of Friedrichsplatz in  
 front of Ruruhaus  
 during documenta fifteen,  
 by Simon Kentgens



img 13  
photo ruruHaus Kassel,  
source: Wikimedia Commons,  
licensed under the Creative  
Commons Attribution-Share  
Alike 3.0 Germany license

img 14  
Lumbung ekosistem  
visualization, dokumenta  
fifteen.  
Photo by Florian Cramer





img 15  
BananSkolen, group photo  
ca. 2021 – used with friendly  
permission by the artists

img 16  
screenshot of Lumbung  
Gallery homepage,  
[https://www.lumbunggallery.  
theartists.net/](https://www.lumbunggallery.theartists.net/)



•••••

**LUMBUNG GALLERY IS A COOPERATIVE  
EXPERIMENT IN CO-OWNERSHIP,  
EXCHANGE, AND TRANSVESTMENT AT  
DOCUMENTA FIFTEEN.**

Rooted in principles such as collectivity, communal sharing, and equal allocation of returns and resources, Lumbung represents an artistic and economic model focused on sustaining

# Power 100

The annual ranking of the most influential people in art

2022 ▾ Nationality ▾ Category ▾ Name ▾ Navigate to 1-10 11-20 21-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 ⌂

1



**ruangrupa**

Artist Collective – Jakarta-based artist collective and Artistic Directors of Documenta 15

↑ 2021 - 3

2



**Cecilia Alemani**

Curator – Artistic Director of the 59th Venice Biennale

↑ 2021 - 18

3



**Unions**

Activist Movement – Collective action among artists and museum workers

4



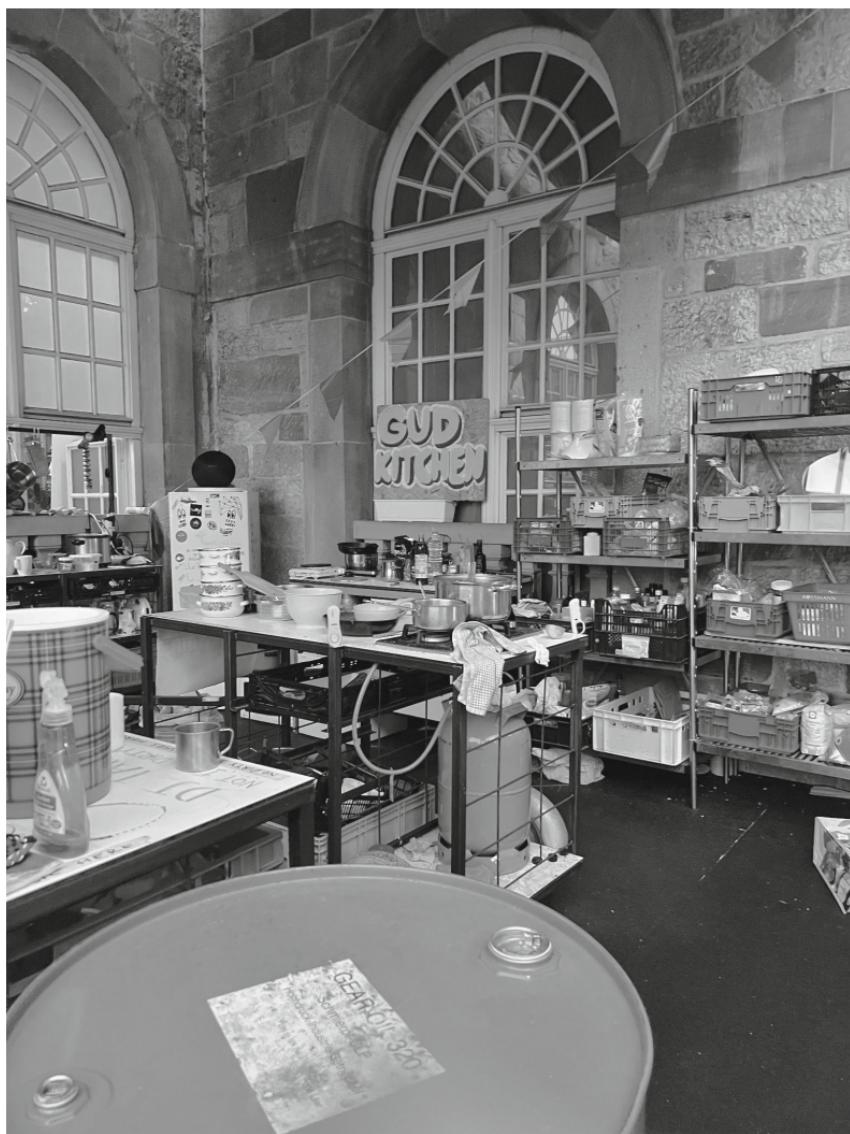
**Hito Steyerl**

Artist – Political statement-making and formal experimentation

↑ 2021 - 17

5

img 17  
screenshot Art Power 100,  
ArtReview, 2022/3,  
<https://artreview.com/power-100/>



img 18  
Gudkitchen in the backyard of the  
Fridericianum museum Kassel during  
documenta fifteen,  
Photo by Simon Kentgens



img 19

Eskra Community Art Group, St Patrick's Day 2015, Pictured at Market Street, Omagh, Northern Ireland. Photo by Kenneth Allen, Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 2.0 Generic (CC BY-SA 2.0) license

img 20  
Screenshot Studio Theo Deutinger,  
Wljkonomie statement, 2012

TD PROJECTS PUBLICATIONS LECTURES & TEACHING EXHIBITIONS CLIENTS & PARTNERS

◀ Results  TD of Urbanism, TD of Exhibitions, TD of Investigation  August 14, 2012 

## We Don't Trust You Architects

 Text  Images  Video

more miserable than before. All expectations and trust by the people of Tarwewijk did disappear with the people foreign to the place.

Tarwewijk does not need us to know what to do; Tarwewijk knows exactly what to do. Do it yourself Tarwewijk! We propose a project stop, a concept stop and a subsidy stop for initiatives from outside of Tarwewijk. The people of Tarwewijk know how to do things; they know how to start a business, they know how to work around regulations. We trust in the power of the people in Tarwewijk.





img 21  
former Salzmann factory in Kassel-East,  
photo: Thomas Bröker/Wikimedia Commons,  
licensed under the Creative Commons  
Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International  
license



img 22  
Photo by Florian Cramer



img 23  
photo video screen Hübner / FAFSWAG.  
Photo by Florian Cramer



img 24  
Spontaneous karaoke session  
at Apamart, a food market  
during documenta fifteen,  
organized by JaF, invited  
friends and students and staff  
of the Willem de Kooning  
Academy Rotterdam.  
Photo by Simon Kentgens



img 25  
Radio WORM's studio where  
the conversation took place.  
Photo by Florian Cramer

Simon Kentgens, artist, lecturer and researcher on collective autonomy and artist's self-organization. Past projects include *Laden Saleh*, in Dresden (D), a temporary kiosk and community art project inspired by the story of the Indonesian painter and prince Raden Saleh who lived and worked in Dresden in the 19th century; *Creating the Commons* at VU University Amsterdam, The Netherlands and *Made in Commons* with KUNCI Study Forum and Collective, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Simon is currently developing a community space in Rotterdam.

Florian Cramer, practice-oriented research professor at Willem de Kooning Academy, Rotterdam, with a professional background in academic humanities and a personal background in DIY culture since the 1980s. Recent publications include *Making Matters: A Vocabulary for Collective Arts*, co-authored with other researchers and artist collectives, and the essay *A Near-sighted Falling into Technology: Through the Looking*

*Glass of Art Practice as Human Self-Experimentation, Accidents and Coincidence*, co-authored with Elaine W. Ho.

HumDrumPress is an experimental publishing project and expanded publishing practice that works, through collaborative means, to question the conventions of publishing. In doing so, we wish to explore new, connected ways of documenting and circulating voices, ideas, and contexts, and better understand the role of “publishing” and “publisher” within current political, economic, and ecological climates.

HumDrumPress is composed of Amy Gowen (Editor and Researcher) and Wibke Bramesfeld (Graphic Designer), as well as our growing network of writers, artists, musicians, thinkers, friends, and collaborators.



Roof Tile Orchestra  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1d-115fHc7qzplKuy4JMAr5RSZ0SNq7rB/view?  
usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1d-115fHc7qzplKuy4JMAr5RSZ0SNq7rB/view?usp=sharing)



Goodiepal, Bananskolen:  
The ghost from  
The Teenage Roast,  
from the album  
Pruttipal Index, Futura  
Resistenza, 2023  
[https://futuraresistenza.  
bandcamp.com/track/  
the-ghost-from-the-  
teenage-roast](https://futuraresistenza.bandcamp.com/track/the-ghost-from-the-teenage-roast)



Hübner Stammsitz  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RWbFZaA6YjWAcibosW7kKC\\_ejqcJPU\\_-/view?  
usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RWbFZaA6YjWAcibosW7kKC_ejqcJPU_-/view?usp=sharing)

Lumbung, commons, community art  
- a conversation on the behind-the-scenes  
of documenta fifteen

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Documenta fifteen was a large-scale collective experiment in creating a commons using the art system. How did its lumbung community experience it? What happened on site and behind the scenes? What went wrong, what can we take away from it? How does documenta fifteen fit into a larger picture of collective and community-oriented art practices?

A conversation between  
Simon Kentgens and Florian Cramer,  
both peripheral participants in  
documenta fifteen.